

Remarks

In response to the Office Action dated May 23, 2005, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims. The indication that claims 4, 5, 9 and 10 contain allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation. The rewriting of those claims in independent form is being held in abeyance, pending consideration of this response.

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 7 were objected to as containing informalities. Claims 1 and 6 have been amended to adopt the examiner's suggestions. With respect to claims 2 and 7, the Office Action proposes that these claims be amended to recite that the retardation compensator be specified as "the retardation compensator for the primary color light with the shortest wavelength." It is respectfully submitted that this proposed change would be inaccurate. As disclosed in the specification, it is not just the compensator for the shortest wavelength light that is composed of at least two kinds of thin film layers. Rather, each of the different compensators has such a structure. See, for example, page 21, lines 24-28. Claims 2 and 7 have been amended to clarify this aspect of the invention.

Claims 1 and 6 were rejected under 35 USC 102, on the grounds that they were considered to be anticipated by the Yamagishi patent (US 5,157,523). Claims 2, 3, 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over the Yamagishi patent in view of the Weber patent (US 6,590 707). It is respectfully submitted that the Yamagishi patent does not anticipate, or otherwise suggest, the claimed subject matter, either by itself or in combination with the Weber patent.

The Yamagishi patent discloses a liquid crystal projection unit in which the liquid crystal panels for each of the three colors has at least one phase plate, e.g. 3a and 3b, that functions as a retarder. The patent discloses that the phase plates for the respective colors differ from one another by their relative angles of orientation 13a, 13b, and/or retardation values $\Delta n d$. The Office Action is apparently taking the position that if the plates have different retardation values, they must therefore have different structures.

However, the patent does not disclose *how* the different retardation values are achieved. It could be the case, for example, that slightly different materials, having different indices of refraction, are used for the phase plates. In contrast, one of the features of the claimed invention is that the compensator for one of the light paths differs from those of the other paths in a physical dimension, such as the thickness in the direction of the optical axis. By means of this feature, all of the compensators can be made from the same material. This aspect of the invention greatly simplifies the manufacturing process.


It is respectfully submitted that the Yamagishi patent does not disclose that the retardation compensator for the primary color light with the shortest wavelength has a different physical dimension from the retardation compensators for other primary colors, as recited in claims 1 and 6. Nor does it disclose that the compensators are made from the same materials, as recited in new claims 11 and 13, or that the different physical dimension is the thickness of the compensator in the direction of the optical axis, as recited in new claims 12 and 14.

Furthermore, the Weber patent does not overcome these distinctions between the claimed subject matter and the disclosure of the Yamagishi patent.

For the foregoing reasons, therefore, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are allowable over the references. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Upon review of the application, it was noted that Figure 17 is a duplicate of Figure 12. However, Figure 12 pertains to the first disclosed embodiment, whereas Figure 17 pertains to the second disclosed embodiment, and therefore it will be appreciated that the values in the two tables should not be the same. To correct this obvious error, a replacement sheet containing a corrected version of claim 17, which corresponds to the second embodiment, is being submitted herewith.

Respectfully submitted,
BUCHANAN INGERSOLL PC

By: 
James A. LaBarre
Registration No. 28,632

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P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620

Amendments To The Drawings

Replace the sheet of drawings containing Figures 17 and 18 with the accompanying Replacement Sheet containing the same figures.

In the Replacement sheet, the values in the table of Figure 17 have been corrected to correspond to the second disclosed embodiment.